

Claims 1-23 are pending in this application, with Claims 1, 17, 19, and 22 being independent.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,785,814 (Usami, et al.). Claims 4-11 and 16-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Usami, et al., and Claims 12-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Usami, et al. in view of US 2001/0013097 A1 (Ito, et al.) Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention recites, *inter alia*, the features of adding additional information to image data to generate information-added data, and encrypting the information-added data to make it difficult to detect that the additional information is added. Applicants submit that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least this combination of features.

Usami, et al. discloses that supplementary information is embedded in original image data *after* the supplementary information is encrypted, as described at lines 37-40 of column 5 and lines 55-62 of column 10 of that patent. Thus, according to Usami, et al., only the supplementary information is encrypted and the original image data is not encrypted. More specifically, data generated by combining the supplementary information with the original image data is not encrypted. Accordingly, that patent does not disclose or suggest at least the feature of encrypting information-added data (i.e., data generated by adding additional information to image data), as recited in independent Claim 1.

As recited in Claim 1, the information-added data is encrypted so as to make it difficult to detect that the additional information is added to the image data. In contrast,

since only the supplementary information is in encrypted, it may be difficult to detect the content of the supplementary information but it will not be made difficult to detect the existence of that information.

Each of independent Claims 17, 19, and 22 also recites the feature of encrypting information-added data, and Applicant submits that those claims are patentable over the cited art for reasons similar to those discussed with respect to Claim 1.

The dependent claims are believed patentable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims from which they respectively depend, as well as for the additional features those dependent claims recite.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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